

Technology-Related Assistance (CFDA Nos. 84.224)

I. Legislation

Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988, as amended, Title I (U.S.C. 2201-2217) (expires September 30, 1998).

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1989	\$ 5,150,000
1990	14,814,000
1991	20,982,000
1992	28,000,000
1993	34,067,795
1994	37,744,000
1995	39,249,000
1996	36,109,000

No state may receive more than 10 years of funding under this program.

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

The Technology-Related Assistance Program provides support to states for the development of technology-related activities and initiatives designed to enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to access assistive devices and services through systems changes, advocacy, and consumer responsiveness.

The efforts are intended to:

- Increase the availability of assistive devices and services by helping states to review or establish policies and procedures that may help ensure the availability of assistive devices; increase funding for the provision of devices and revise policies that impede device availability; build state and local capability to provide services; and improve coordination among public and private agencies;
- Increase the awareness and knowledge about assistive technology among persons with disabilities, their families, professionals who work with disabled persons, employers, community organizations, and other involved groups; and

- Increase public and government awareness of the needs of individuals with disabilities for assistive technology devices and services.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

Discretionary grants are made to agencies designated by the governors to develop comprehensive statewide programs of technology-related assistance. In addition, there is a statutory requirement for a technical assistance project to assist the state technology programs and a similar statutory requirement for technical assistance to consumers, families, protection and advocacy agencies, and community organizations.

The state projects may carry out a wide variety of activities, depending on the particular needs in the state. These include identifying the number and needs of persons with disabilities for assistive technology; identifying and coordinating resources for services and devices; disseminating information and increasing public awareness; providing training and technical assistance; providing assistance to statewide and community-based organizations; improving staff qualifications; and compiling and evaluating data.

Strategic Initiatives

The Secretary has developed an information system that provides quantitative and qualitative data on the program's impact. In FY 1995, the technical assistance grant was continued for five years to help states implement their development grants and to work with them in developing an information system. The grantee offers consultation on such matters as building a more efficient administrative structure, providing leadership training for improved project performance, strengthening consumer involvement, developing effective interagency agreements, effecting systemic change, and locating funding sources to help individuals acquire assistive devices. The contractor assists the states in their annual self-assessment processes.

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

FY 1996 grants totaling \$34.5 million were made to 56 entities (50 states and 6 outlying areas) for this program. The projects have resulted in models of systems change, advocacy, consumer responsiveness, and support activities that may be adopted by other states and communities. For example:

- Utah established assistive technology service centers in five sites throughout the state; each of these centers assesses more than 300 clients a year;
- Maine established an interactive cable television program that reached homes, offices, and classrooms throughout the state;
- Illinois set up a store-front information center and office in the state capitol; and

- Colorado funded five multi-disciplinary "assistive technology teams" through a competitive process; team members who are experienced in service delivery meet regularly with consumers and their families across the state.

IV. Planned Studies

An evaluation is planned for FY 1998.

V. Sources of Information

Program files.

VI. Contacts for Further Information

Program Operations: Carol Cohen, (202) 205-5666

Program Studies: Steven Zwillinger, (202) 401-1678